

THE PARADISE-BIRDS
IN THE ZOOLOGICAL
SOCIETY'S GARDENS.

MR. A. R. WALLACE, the well-known traveller and naturalist, who has been engaged these last eight years in exploring the little-known islands of the Indian Archipelago, has for some time held a commission to obtain living birds of paradise for the Zoological Society of London; but, although he visited in person the islands inhabited by several species of this magnificent group of birds, he failed in his efforts to preserve these birds alive when captured, and had given up all hopes of being successful in his object. It was only a short time before Christmas last, when in the interior of Sumatra, that Mr. Wallace received information of two specimens of the lesser bird of paradise (*Paradisea papuana*) being alive in captivity at Singapore. Mr. Wallace immediately proceeded to that place, purchased the birds, which were then in the hands of a European merchant, and left by the following mail for England, arriving in safety in London with his valuable burden on the 1st of this month.

The two paradise-birds have been lodged in the upper part of the Zoological Society's old museum, a room having been fitted up for their reception with a large cage of galvanised iron wire 20 ft. long by 11 ft. in width. As they are both males it has been found necessary to keep them apart, the sight of one another, or even of a paradise-bird's plumes waved near them in the air, producing in them great excitement. The cage has therefore been divided by a screen, which excludes the light, and the two birds placed in the separate compartments. The remarkable side plumes which ornament the males of the true *Paradisea* when in full dress are as yet but partially developed in these specimens; but in a few weeks, if the birds continue to thrive, will probably attain their full dimensions.

The paradise-birds in the Zoological Society's gardens are fed on rice, bread, vegetables, and fruit, but require also insect food, and seem particularly partial to mealworms and cockroaches. They are very tame, readily taking a titbit from the hand of the attendant, and, considering the confinement they have been subject to during their long journey from Singapore, in wonderful health and condition.



BIRDS OF PARADISE IN THE ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY'S GARDENS, REGENT'S PARK.

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Paradisea minor Shaw (New Guinea)

6240